

REMARKS***Status of the Claims***

Claims 11 – 18 and 20 are pending, with claim 11 being independent. Without conceding the propriety of the rejections, claims 1 – 10, 19, and 21 have been canceled herein without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein in order to expedite prosecution.

Initially, Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 11-18 and 20 are allowable over the art of record.

Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the outstanding rejections in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 19 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. Without conceding the propriety of the rejection, claim 19 has been canceled in order to expedite prosecution, thereby rendering this rejection moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-4, 6, and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 2,836,555 (“Armentrout”). Claims 1, 7-10, and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,657,822 (“James”).

Without conceding the propriety of the rejections, claims 1 – 10, 19, and 21 have been canceled in order to expedite prosecution, thereby rendering these rejections moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-6 and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over James in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,462,470 (“Alexander”) or Armentrout.

Without conceding the propriety of the rejections, claims 1 – 10, 19, and 21 have been canceled in order to expedite prosecution, thereby rendering the rejection moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Conclusion

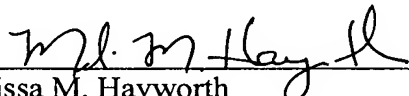
Without conceding the propriety of the rejections, claims 1 – 10, 19, and 21 have been canceled merely in order to expedite prosecution and to pursue an early allowance.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the claims and allowance of the subject application is earnestly solicited. In the event that there are any questions relating to this application, it would be appreciated if the Examiner would telephone the undersigned attorney concerning such questions so that prosecution of this application may be expedited.

In the event any further fees are due to maintain pendency of this application, the Examiner is authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account No. 02-4800.

Respectfully submitted,

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